



Technology Lessons 4 Teachers

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Newsletter



Word Tamer

www.wordtamer.co.uk

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Word Tamer is a fantastic site that walks students through the writing process by creating & developing new writing possibilities. Students practice skills for writing a creative story by, “Grapple with Genre,” “Snare a Setting,” “Prowl through Plot,” “Capture a Character,” & “Wild Words.” Judy Waite, author of children & young adult books such as, *Mouse Look Out*, *Forbidden*, & *Funfair* created *Word Tamer* out of creative writing workshops she delivers in schools.



During the journey students can watch videos to help with brainstorming ideas, & understand the roles of characters, settings, & plot development in crafting a good story. It is interactive through the use of a carnival of literary devices. At each stop in the carnival, students can save or print the work they have created to be developed off-line. There are even certificates for students to print out. This is a great way to get reluctant writers started on crafting their own stories. It is engaging, interactive, & creative for all students. It can also be shown on the Promethean board for a whole class activity. One to take the time to check out!



Kidblog

<http://kidblog.org>



With our new *SchoolFusion* website system, teachers can easily create blogs to share with students. It is a great classroom tool, but if you would like your students to create their own blog, then you may want to take a look at **Kidblog**. *Kidblog* is designed for elementary & middle school teachers who want to provide each student with their own unique blog. It allows students to publish posts, & participate in discussions within a secure, teacher controlled, classroom blogging community. No student email addresses are needed.

So what is a blog? It is a mix between an online journal & discussion board. The benefits of students creating & writing a blog are,

- Extends learning & engages students beyond the walls of the classroom,
- Enhances analytic & critical thinking skills,
- The critical skill of writing is central to the act of blogging,
- Enhances knowledge sharing between students,
- A learning activity that is embedded in real world issues & events.

Besides using blogs as a platform for ongoing assessments, here are some other classroom ideas,

- Math: problem of the day, vocabulary, examples of
- Reading: book review, vocabulary, word of the day, author study, book talks
- Writing: journaling, creative writing, autobiographies, biographies, daily oral language
- Science: journaling, share research, collect data

Website 2 Check Out



Clker is a site to get free clipart. There is a large selection to choose from, & the site gives you an opportunity to change any clipart through a built-in graphics-editing program, to update the image to fit your needs. These clipart images work great within the *ActivInspire* program, as that all of the images are cut to the image & no white space is left around the image allowing it to blend to any background page.



Weekly prompts using engaging videos on current events & student-tailored topics, for journal & writing activities your students will love! **TeacherHUB** is a great resource for any educator. Each week a video is uploaded to the website with various prompts for every level of learner. The videos are meant to engage the learners through the use of controversial, discussion-starting conversations. The videos are uploaded for all different subject areas.

TeachHUB Video Writing Prompts

[www.teachhub.com/
video-writing-prompts](http://www.teachhub.com/video-writing-prompts)

Angry Birds Examples,

- K-2: Angry Emotions
 - Those are some angry birds. Have you ever been angry? How do you behave when you feel angry? How should you behave when you feel angry?
- 6-8: Game Instructions
 - Explain step-by-step instructions for playing your favorite game. It could be *Angry Birds*, a video game or a sport. Be sure to explain each step clearly, so your readers can play the game themselves without any other help.



Teacher Feature

Mary Anne Peterson

Mrs. Peterson is a PreK teacher at Plattsmouth Early Childhood Center, who always strives to find ways to introduce technology to her young students. Using technology in an early childhood room can be a challenge at times. The best way young children learn is by hands-on activities. Mrs. Peterson handles this challenge by bringing in iPads to her students. Working with Technology Coordinator, Mrs. Kuhr and Mrs. Haight, a PreK Special Education teacher at PECC, Mrs. Peterson select apps that teach students academic knowledge with a hands-on approach during small group center time. One app that was used is *iWriteWords*, where students follow the crab & practice writing numbers & letters. Mrs. Peterson prepared her students for this activity by having them practice writing their letters in the air & then on the table tops. She also brings in her Nook to read interactive stories to her students. There are even plans in the works to have Mrs. Kuhr bring in an Echo LiveScribe Smartpen to work with students on letters & sounds. Great job to Mrs. Peterson for thinking outside the box to bring technology resources to her students. She is another great example of the teachers our district are honored to have.



The Kid Should See This

www.thekidshouldseethis.com

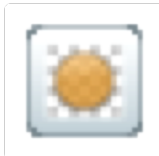
Awesome blog of videos chosen for their appeal to kids, 7 the kid in all of us! These are not videos intended for kids; they are smart, technical, well crafted, & diverse in their subject matter. The blog is put together by a hip mom & her "three year old co-curator". There are videos from around the world on science, music, technology, art, & much more. They post frequently, sometimes more than once a day, so check back often to see what amazing treasures they have unearthed from the vast World Wide Web.

Note: The videos are from various platforms; the *YouTube* ones may not be accessible by students at school.



ActivInspire

Adding Translucency



Sometimes backgrounds can be too busy & makes it hard to see any text on it. By adding a translucent shape on top of a background is a great way to still be able to use your background & still see your text.

1. First add a shape to the flipchart page.
2. Size, position, & color the shape (white or another light color works best).
3. Then move it to the bottom layer.
 - Click on the shape to get the **Marquee Handle**. Then click on the **Object Edit Menu** (the icon that looks like a menu). Go down to **Reorder** & select **To Bottom Layer**.
4. Then select the shape to get to the Marquee Handle & slide the **Translucency Slider** to the amount of visibility you want.
5. Select the Marquee Handle one more time, go back to the Object Edit Menu & click on **Lock** to lock the shape to the page.
6. You now have can keep your background & read your text.





NaturalReader is a free download that has the ability to convert written text to spoken words. It can read from many programs & files, such as *Firefox*, *Safari*, *Word*, *Pages*, email, & PDFs. Just copy & paste the text into the reader or turn on the **Miniboard** & highlight any text that you want it to read. It will then highlight the words as it reads it. You can even slow down the speed it reads to you. Finally, it can convert selected files into mp3s that can be played on portable devices like an iPod.

NaturalReader can act as a visional aide, & can also improve & help proofread students' writing by having the computer read what you wrote. Font & text can be changed into different styles & sizes. If you are interested, please email the Tech Department for us to quickly install the application.

iPod Apps

Spelling Cat, TinkerBox, & Free Graphing Calculator

ELEMENTARY



Spelling Cat – Unscramble words or fill in missing letters to make the Cat play a sound, but watch out because the Cat will scold you with a horrible song if you get it wrong. The game is designed to be flexible to assist anyone regardless of their own spelling proficiency, by creating & customizing word lists. Mini games include – Speak Easy, Scramble, & Missing Letter.

MIDDLE SCHOOL



TinkerBox – This is a problem-solving app where kids can solve puzzles that the program provides for them or they can create puzzles of their own. They can even submit their finished puzzles to the company if they would want too. This app would remind kids of the *Incredible Machines* program that they have used in Industrial Technology classes with Mr. Knust.

HIGH SCHOOL



Free Graphing Calculator – Just like it says! Input your calculations in the *Calculator* or *Equations* sections & they will plot on the Graph. The *Reference* section has numerous definitions & explanations of mathematical terms. Lots of other additional features. *Also available on Middle School iPods.*